

'The Holocaust industry is a joke'



Tom-Jan Meeus

The polemicist Norman Finkelstein, critic of the "Holocaust industry", lost this month under pressure from the Israel Lobby his job at the university. "There is mercilessly hacked me."

Six months ago, Norman Finkelstein gave a guest lecture in Waltham, Massachusetts. At Brandeis University he criticized, as always, the Israel Lobby in the United States, which he exploited the Holocaust to legitimate criticism of Israel to suppress.

After his speech was a Jewish man, a Zionist. He asked Finkelstein if he hates his parents - both survived the concentration camps. Finkelstein spoke against it. Then the man asked: "Raped your cousin?"

This was the umpteenth time, says Finkelstein home in New York, which he last year received a punch below the belt. After it became known that his employer, the Catholic DePaul University in Chicago, wanted to give him a permanent position, and so would provide legitimacy to his sometimes stinging criticism of official Judaism in the U.S., which escalated into a national discussion about his personality.

Norman Finkelstein Deugde really? And had a left-wing man like him, a follower of Noam Chomsky, and according to his critics rather than academic propagandist, is entitled to an appointment at a U.S. university?

"It was a great diversion. I am internationally recognized as an authority in my field. I have written five books (see sidebar, ed) including 46 international editions have appeared. My work is featured by magazines such as Foreign Affairs, The London Review of Books and The Middle East Journal. My last book was positively reviewed by six leading academics in the world in my field.

"They knew not what they had with me. I am Jewish: suggest that I am anti-Semite - the usual trick - is to me not. My parents have been in the camps, a Holocaust denier even though I can not. And I graduated from Princeton - so you can put away I do not like a screwball. Thus they went on but the man play. I had to be brought into disrepute."

How?

"It was relentless. There is a record of sixty pages about me was circulated at the university stating that my deceased mother was a collaborator and that in my previous job I was fired for mental instability. And it got worse, much worse. "

A smear campaign?

"A nightmare. There is mercilessly hacked me. Each week brought new accusations. In order to refute them I had for weeks at night work. Write memos. Explain. Explain.

"But the more mud is thrown, the harder it is to stay clean. People simply float the idea that if a lie is big enough, some of it will be true. That is the old logic of Hitler: A small lie brings people to doubt, a big lie, they say it can not all the time invented. And so began the barrage of personal attacks on people in the head to sit. "

How did it work?

"Then they said I had myself under control. I yelled at students. It never happened, but it was said. At the end I was a psychopath. I had to be expelled from the university because I was a danger to the safety of staff and students. This kept it going.

"Only with great difficulty I kept myself upright. In my last week at the university I am eight pounds. I had not slept for five nights. They tried to make me crazy. A political battle, I have - that's nice, that challenges you. But this just turned to me, and what to me was bad. A character assassination. "

And so is Norman Finkelstein now flip-flops by his apartment in Brooklyn: tenure, he was ultimately denied earlier this month, after five years on contract basis at DePaul had worked. Outside the U.S., the appreciation of his work high - next month he talks in Japan (Kyoto) and UK (Oxford), the next month in Canada (Ottawa) - but in the American academic world is no place for Norman Finkelstein.

And while his work was primarily opposes the false image that he says in his own country of the Holocaust occurred. In Holocaust Industry (2000) described how the Six Day War in 1967

heralded a turning point. Until that time, the extermination of the Jews little attention in America. But in 1967, Israel was of great strategic value for the U.S., and the military support to the country to justify the Holocaust to American recipe was magnified.

The final solution was now not just a war crime, Finkelstein wrote, it was the worst war crime in history. In education, science, literature and television, according to him was the norm. The Holocaust The Holocaust was: an industry.

The number of victims grew by Finkelstein as it was longer ago. Any criticism of Israel was now taboo - that would be a desecration of the Holocaust. The Israel Lobby built a repressive machine. Journalists, scientists, members of Congress: anyone who criticized Israel, according to Finkelstein was a target.

Meanwhile, wealthy conservative Jews used the final solution to strengthen their economic position. From banks and companies in Europe, according to Finkelstein in the nineties on dubious grounds off millions trough money as compensation for the Holocaust.

For Finkelstein was that last one unforgivable betrayal of the real victims of the Holocaust, as his parents. In the interview he is calm and accessible hours. But when we come on this subject, he loses himself. With its highly trained body and broad shoulders he staggers to the bathroom. If he returns - dark glasses for his tearful eyes to mask - he points to the wall in his living room, where photos of his dead relatives hang.

"I went through a very difficult year. I'm at the limit of what I can handle. My parents lived every day with that war. Every day. My father was in hospital with Alzheimer. At night he tried to escape. They had to tie him. And he pleaded with them: do not do it, do not! He thought he was back in Auschwitz.

"He was always awake to the ground. "Why?" I said. "The Germans are behind me." My mother cursed the Jewish organizations to the last day of her life because she is not got the money which she was entitled.

"My parents have never been able to tell their families what had happened. Never. If you ask me how their parents died, their sisters, their brother - I would not tell you. It has always remained within them.

"But to have that scum of Jewish society - that people who have no idea of what happened in

the war and the interests they are not - doing to see all that suffering into deceit, blackmail in, in a operation to someone else's pocket money to knock * People who do that are the most heinous fraudsters and forgers on earth. Negotiate the price of the Jews who survived the Holocaust! Just bizarre! Rabble is! Megalomaniac maniacs! Men who dared to testify in Congress: I speak for the six million dead. If a bunch of off-licenses! Slijters presenting himself as the king of the Jews present! Too bad for words. And then you ask why I am angry? Because I usually am. I'll be glad when they sit behind bars. I am against the death penalty, but for them I would like to make an exception. "

A representative of the Israel Lobby played a special role in the dismissal of Finkelstein - Alain Dershowitz, one of America's modern TV personalities. He is a lawyer - he worked among others for OJ Simpson - and law professor at Harvard. And he does, as a progressive Democrat, as one of America's most ardent opponents of critics of Israel. In that role he crossed swords with, among others, former President Jimmy Carter and professors Maersheimer and Walt, who last year criticized the influence of the Israel Lobby on America's foreign policy.

The latest book by Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah* (2005), was largely a response to Dershowitz's defense of the human rights situation in Israel. In *The Case for Israel* (2003) put Dershowitz celebrated the observance of human rights in the country, but according to Finkelstein's book of nonsense that hung together. He also accused Dershowitz of plagiarism and falsification - the professor would not have written the book - but had to withdraw his claims.

Their feud grew into a dirty war. Dershowitz was the man who the sixty pages of the dossier on Finkelstein at DePaul sent out, making it possible employment of Finkelstein was a national issue - Finkelstein and eventually drew the short straw.

What do you like Dershowitz?

"Not very interesting really. He is intelligent, otherwise he was not arrived at Harvard. But the celebrity status has him murdered intellectual. Read his books. There are not really good ideas. No scientific ambitions. They are empty. And I mean not to ridicule him. I'd rather be intellectually challenged. "

Why are you writing a book largely about him?

"It's not about him but about his book. And on the wrong image in American society of human rights violations by Israel. I show you a crook has to be to avoid doing what he does: that Israel is a superior way to handle human rights. That simply does not.

"But I can not say this is a great intellectual challenge. There's not a clever argument that whole book. Thus he claims that more Palestinians than Israelis have been killed when the foiled suicide attacks has more. That level. Something like: if my grandmother had wheels, she was now a baby."

You may not exaggerating? You said first that he had written his book and had to come back again later.

"I believe he did not write the book."

But you had no proof.

"In September 2003 I had a televised debate with him. From the footnotes of his book showed that he and June 2003 the manuscript had worked. But in September he had no idea what the book was. He knew names of people he quotes. What do you think? But it is true that I could not prove my assertion that I have withdrawn. "

The Israel Lobby tries critics of Israel are always controversial to do. Proves you do not approach them with your service?

"I do not think this is true. I'm not controversial. And I try really not to be coy. But people do not read, that is one of the major problems in American culture. In my book, basing myself on Amnesty, Human Rights Watch, an Israeli human rights organization. I quote moderate historians around the world are cited.

"My mother hated my style. Too boring, she said that wax from a candle drips. I am extremely boring and methodical. A researcher footnotes. Do you have the layout of my book. Usually it is a sense of Dershowitz and then flat text pages in which I prove why it is not true. I really do not write on the loose."

You get the impression that, after weeks of serious research, sometimes just a joke to make.

"Humor is part of it. Otherwise you might as well die. "

But your jokes are usually at the expense of someone - that the trouble begins.

"If your opponent deserves respect, he gets it from me. But if he was not serious, he deserves to be ridiculed. Elie Wiesel, for example. Is that a writer, a philosopher? Do you ever listen to that man? "Writing is horizontal, vertical silence is." I mean, that's Woody Allen! Characters in Annie Hall! "

Even now you can see that you enjoy him to ridicule.

"The whole Holocaust industry is in fact a joke. Each year, the number of victims here! If it were a new invention is a physicist! What can you do but smile? If I did not laugh, I would implode."

But the same jokes have you been in your current situation - no work, expelled from the academic world.

"Have I made it easier with my jokes? Absolutely. Do I regret it? No. So I am. I did that from my parents. You know the famous line from the anarchist Emma Goldman: "If I can not dance I do not want your revolution." The same goes for me and laugh. I reserve the right to laugh. And the right to ridicule those who deserve it. "

You will not only controversial jokes. You also said that human rights in Israel are similar to those under Saddam Hussein. Your evidence?

"On the eve of the first Gulf War, I have the human rights violations in Israel compared to that of Saddam, according to Amnesty. And in the occupied territories at that time was the situation in Israel similar to those in Iraq. "

The occupied territories - that is not synonymous with Israel? And in Israel are not yet members of the opposition beheaded?

"No, but the occupied territories are a part of Israel. And let the facts. Israel in 1987 is the only country in the world authorized torture. Israel legalized the only country in the world

hostage. Israel legalized the only country in the world the destruction of houses as punishment. People do not like to hear this. But the facts are. "

Just before his forced departure Finkelstein posted a small victory over DePaul. Initially, the university, in line with the criticism of Jewish organizations, found that he played too much on the man and an inadequate academic had worn for a permanent job to qualify. But three weeks ago, the university still a statement that Finkelstein an "excellent teacher" and a "productive scientist," to the fury of Dershowitz.

Despite your case, there are indications that the Israel lobby is losing ground. Is that correct?

"The lobby has obvious problems. The consensus is broken. Take the book by Jimmy Carter (Peace Not Apartheid, ed.) The lobby said it was paid by sheikhs and that Carter was a sympathizer of the Nazis. He supported terrorists. But his book finished top of the bestseller list. At Brandeis, he received a standing ovation from 2000 people. When Dershowitz arose with his reaction left two-thirds of the audience hall. The professors Walt and Maersheimer (authors of a harsh criticism of the Israel Lobby, ed) their book, despite protests from Dershowitz, a highly regarded publisher managed to bring under. These are all signs of the times. "

Why is that?

"With the debacle in Iraq and the superficial idea that Israel is responsible for it. The deeper reason is that Israel is getting worse in keeping the reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to hide. The facts are more widely known. The occupation has lasted forty years and it is increasingly difficult to defend Israel. The consensus in the academic world is going in that direction. Israel on campuses is considerably less popular than a decade ago. "

It has been suggested that they have dismissed you especially for the money. The university would have been under pressure from sponsors.

"I was a big financial risk for the university. I knew that. I found also that the university in that respect had an argument against me. It is a Catholic university, one is vulnerable to the accusation of antisemitism. And why should such a high price they pay for my presence?

"I only wished that she had immediately admitted. They had to say: you have every right to academic appointment but if we hire you we are the next twenty years under fire. Then I would have said you do not have to pay for my political ideas, let a settlement. But they made sure that I am not competent scholar. That is now put right. And that's good. "

What does it say about the scientific climate in this country that lenders such great influence?

"If you're money depending on your choice of academic staff, if you are vulnerable to campaigns which threatened to give less money, then of course that affects the credibility. The university becomes a circus. Without outside pressure, I would always have had that appointment. "

What will you do now?

"I just want to read and write. I spent a year no serious work to do. How do I get my money? I do not know, I will see. I am 53, so I'm happy on the way to the end."

Radical intelletctueel

Norman G. Finkelstein (1953) by American standards is a radical intellectual. He sees the famous leftist linguist Noam Chomsky as his best friend and finds that academics have to combine their work with political activism. His personal battle against him under false picture of the Holocaust in the U.S., so far not found much resonance in our own country. Unlike in Europe, his books in America if not neergesabeld still ignored. But the discussion about his possible employment at DePaul University in Chicago has changed slightly. The case received much attention in the last year the American press, including through the involvement of famous Americans in the debate.

Finkelstein is mainly a critic. His books include critical examination of the work of others. His most famous books: *A Nation On Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth* (1998), - an attack on the finding of Daniel Goldhagen certainly 100,000 Germans actively had participated in the murder of Jews, *The Holocaust Industry* (2000), in which he outlines how and why in the U.S. history of the Holocaust would be distorted, and *Beyond Chutzpah* (2005), about the poor human rights situation in Israel and the people who defend it, as Dershowitz.

Well-known historians, notably Raul Hilberg, have been the intellectual courage Finkelstein praised, as seen on normanfinkelstein.com. At the same time all his actions constantly followed and attacked by Jewish watchdog groups in the U.S., among other camera.org.

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